



**NATIONAL STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY**

**DR. JULIUS MAADA BIO**

**HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT FOR HEADS OF STATE AND  
GOVERNMENT**

**AFRICA CLIMATE SUMMIT 2023**

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2023 at 09:00 am**

**Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC)**

**Nairobi, Kenya**

**4-6 September 2023**

**Your Excellency President Dr William Ruto, President of  
The Republic of Kenya;**

**Your Excellency Azali Assoumani, President of the  
Union of Comoros and Chairperson of the African  
Union;**

**Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;**

**Your Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson  
of the African Union Commission;**

**Your Excellency António Guterres, the United Nations  
Secretary-General;**

**Distinguished Delegates;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**Good Morning.**

- 1.** I am pleased to address this high-level session of the Africa Climate Summit 2023 under the Kenyan Presidency and to reaffirm Sierra Leone's commitment to scale up climate action urgently.
  
- 2.** I must thank His Excellency President William Ruto and the Government of Kenya for the excellent arrangements made for this Summit as African countries seek to address climate change priorities in this critical decade.

**MR. PRESIDENT, EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,**

3. Permit me to guide you on a journey that weaves through the heart and soul of a country I hold dear — Sierra Leone. Our nation is an orchestra of nature's wonders, with majestic Mountains towering above and where thunder's powerful anthem rolls across vast plains, reminiscent of age-old African drums.

**4.** From coastal kisses with the Atlantic Ocean to panoramic vistas, from the towering “King of the Mountains”, the Loma Mountains, to our sprawling national parks, Sierra Leone is a canvas painted with nature's most vibrant hues. Our golden beaches are a testament to nature’s artistry.

**YOUR EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,  
IF YOU HAVEN’T BEEN TO SIERRA LEONE, YOU MUST  
COME!**

5. However, beneath our nation's beauty lies an unmistakable urgency. With a median age of just over 19 years, our young population, like the other young populations representing Africa's vibrant future, stands at a defining crossroads.
  
6. Their legacy, and indeed our collective legacy, is shaped by the choices we make today. The seas, once serenading us with gentle lullabies, now warn of rising tides that could erase generational achievements. The rains, which once celebrated our lands, now pose a looming threat. While Sierra Leone is rich with nature's gifts, this very geographical splendour renders us vulnerable.

**7.** Climate change for us isn't a distant shadow. Climate projections in Sierra Leone include temperature increases, extreme weather, intense precipitation, and rising sea levels. Our shores, symbols of natural grandeur, are receding. Many of our communities face displacement, our pristine beaches risk fading away, and calamities like landslides and floods have become hauntingly regular. The surge in pests and diseases is another testament to our enduring imbalance.

8. Without swift, collective action, we risk witnessing the obliteration of Sierra Leone's invaluable ecosystems, leading to further dislocation of our communities and the devastation of their sources of sustenance.
  
9. This is not just a Sierra Leonean story. It is an African Story. It is a Global Story.

## **EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,**

10. Our World is in trouble. But our Continent is **even more so**. The evidence is clear; the time for action is now, but we are running out of time.



**11.** Grounded in this stark reality, my Government remains unwavering in our commitment to fortifying climate resilience, ensuring our people thrive sustainably and harmoniously with nature.

**12.** In our updated Nationally Determined Commitments (NDCs), Sierra Leone has defined a progressive path forward for cutting Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from the 2005 levels: **5% by 2025, 10% by 2030, and 25% by 2050.**

13. My Government is unyieldingly **devoted to climate change resilience and adaptation**. This includes **support for community-based adaptation in agriculture and energy sectors, integrated water resource management, and climate change disaster risk management**. We are also poised to **improve meteorological services for early warning systems** and **enhance and protect conservation, natural habitats and ecosystems**.

14. Furthermore, our **Climate Change Mitigation strategies** extend to **promoting renewable energy, infrastructure resilience, and extensive reforestation efforts on at least 960,000 hectares of**

**land. As we engage in country planning, we will also prioritise low-carbon screening.**

## **EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,**

**15.** To reaffirm our commitment, we have institutionalised efforts against this global menace, we have established a dedicated Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and a Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Food Security Presidential Initiative.

**16.** We are designing policies and programmes and laying the framework to establish strong partnerships for funding and implementing projects on major cross-cutting thematic areas of national and global significance.

- 17.** Agriculture is the mainstay of our economy. Recognising the core importance and extreme vulnerability of agriculture in Sierra Leone, we're focusing on resilience and innovation within this sector, leveraging technology and forward-thinking strategies for climate adaptation.
- 18.** Our overarching aspiration, as enshrined in our National Development Plan, is clear: achieve **food and nutrition security by 2030 through climate-smart practices bolstered by renewable energy throughout the agricultural value chain.**

## **EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,**

**19.** Meaningful inclusion and inter-generational dialogue are crucial to achieving **SDG 13: "to take urgent action to combat Climate Change and its impacts"**.

**20.** In Sierra Leone, we consider our women equal partners for development. We passed the progressive Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Bill, which guarantees by law a minimum of 30% representation of women for all appointive and elective positions. My Government is committed to promoting the inclusion of women in climate resilience programmes and the participation of women in

decision-making for climate change adaptation and mitigation governance at all levels.

- 21.** We must harness our demographic dividend on the Continent and involve our youthful population in our Climate Adaptation and Mitigation efforts through Youth Adaptation initiatives to prepare the next generation of African youth for green economic opportunities and increase youth-led climate innovations through increased finance and skills development access.

## **EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,**

**22.** Sierra Leone's quest for environmental resilience hinges upon our capacity to access climate finance, build local competencies, and refine our legislative blueprints. Solutions like carbon markets, innovative debt swaps, and novel financial tools such as leveraging our natural resources may be our bridge to surmount the fiscal chasm.

**23.** Our appeal is clear: **Sierra Leone seeks equitable, nimble, and timely access to climate financing.**

We ask for unbarred access to new climate

change adaptation and mitigation technologies and shared knowledge. Our salvation from the escalating climate crisis lies in collective wisdom and concerted efforts.

**24.** Another challenge is our institutional prowess in designing programs that attract climate finance is still developing. We yearn for the guidance and backing to bolster our legislative architecture, especially concerning forest conservation.



## **EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,**

**25.** However, while shared, the responsibility for climate adaptation and mitigation is not and should not be evenly distributed. Expecting countries like Sierra Leone to bear the brunt of a crisis they scarcely contributed to without robust support from the primary emitters — the industrial giants — is fundamentally unjust. **Our stance is unequivocal: We are here to collaborate, not capitulate. We seek cooperation, not charity.**

**26.** The actions of significant polluters must pivot from mere declarations and vague commitments to actionable, technology-driven reparations. It's a demand grounded in the technical feasibility of climate justice, not just its moral imperative. A unified front against this existential crisis is not just desired; it is imperative.

**27.** In closing, I implore all of us present: **The hourglass of action is dwindling, and the sands of time wait for none. Let's come together, not just in spirit, but**

**in actionable solidarity. For in unity, we find not just strength but salvation.**

**I THANK YOU ALL.**